

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Five-Year Public Education Plan

Section V.C. -- Public Information and Participation, Five-Year Stormwater Public Education Strategy -- of the 1996 NPDES Los Angeles County Municipal Stormwater Permit mandates that a comprehensive educational stormwater and urban runoff outreach approach be undertaken to reach as many Los Angeles County residents as possible. The County and the Co-permittees are expected to choose an appropriate combination of educational outreach tools and activities to reach the following objectives: (1) measurably increase the knowledge of the target audiences about the impacts of stormwater pollution and potential solutions to reduce the problems caused; and (2) measurably change the behavior of target audiences by encouraging those audiences to implement appropriate solutions.

What Can the County and the Co-permittees Accomplish Through the Plan?

In developing and implementing this Five-Year Public Education Plan, Los Angeles County and its 85 Co-permittees will meet the basic requirements outlined in the Permit using methods that are cost-efficient and that effectively change behavior. Through a unified and coordinated effort, the County and Co-permittees can:

- ◆ change the mind-set of a large, diverse population while educating target audiences about solutions to stormwater pollution;
- ◆ create synergy by using an overarching campaign approach, “look” and tone, and by unifying multiple pollution prevention efforts;
- ◆ impact more than one audience at a time with a single campaign;
- ◆ build bridges and forge partnerships that integrate city and jurisdictional programs; and,
- ◆ document and prove that the education outreach effort resulted in behavior change that reduced pollution.

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Addressing the Greatest Challenges

Research played an integral role in the development of the Five-Year Public Education Plan. Through focus groups and quantitative surveys, as well as secondary research, the challenges listed below were brought to light.

- ◆ Deciding specifically on which target audiences to focus that will produce the best results in reducing pollution activities
- ◆ Discovering exactly what motivates or influences behavior change in each target audience
- ◆ Addressing the ethnic, cultural, geographical and socio-economic diversity of the County
- ◆ Demonstrating that the public education effort has helped to reduce stormwater/urban runoff pollution

Once these challenges were identified and articulated, solutions were developed and are part of the written Plan.

The Five-Year Public Education Plan -- In A Nutshell

- ◆ Founded on research
- ◆ Meets the requirements of the NPDES Permit
- ◆ Broad-based with an overarching theme
- ◆ Flexible, adaptable, cost-effective
- ◆ Provide simple, everyday actions that will make a difference
- ◆ Integrated and coordinated
- ◆ Results-oriented

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Overarching Approach

In order to achieve maximum effectiveness, the communications program developed in the Five-Year Public Education Plan will have an overarching approach that provides consistent verbal and visual cues to the targeted audiences. The overarching approach provides a campaign identity, a personalized feel and applicable “how to” information about how to solve the stormwater pollution problem. The approach is defined for the Education Plan as a whole and remains consistent throughout the life of the Plan; however, the components within the phases that roll-out over the next four years will be fluid to reflect the evolving message for each targeted audience.

Research supports the value of a “problem/solution”-oriented approach with strong, impactful visuals and an identifying “signature.” The common elements of the overarching approach include: (1) an identified problem caused by stormwater pollution; (2) an identified solution(s) to the particular problem; (3) the campaign theme tagline; (4) a personal approach drawing from a person’s desire to do the right thing “if they only knew;” (5) 1-888-CLEAN-LA hotline number and Co-permittee hotline number if applicable; and (6) Project Pollution Prevention identifying signature.

General Public/Residents

Eighty-three percent (83%) of Los Angeles County’s population can be reached through a single, integrated, multi-faceted communications campaign which focuses on a desire to “do the right thing” and provide “how to” information about alternative, anti-polluting behaviors. This population group also will be impacted by credible messages that imply that a change in their behavior will help protect children, keep their neighborhoods odor-free and preserve the environment for the future. An additional nine percent (9%) -- a harder-to-reach, but high polluting population -- needs a more highly-focused campaign and is not likely to be motivated by doing the right thing, clean neighborhoods or preserving the environment. However, they will listen to messages that involve protecting children and the beach or other watersport areas.

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Mass media like newspapers, radio and billboards are the three key sources of pollution prevention information for the general public. Other General Public/Residents communications tools -- media relations, public service announcements (PSAs), instructional materials, corporate and entertainment industry tie-ins, displays, community events, speakers and experts bureau, and the existing 1-888-CLEAN-LA hotline number -- are planned to work in-concert with the radio, newspaper and billboard advertising.

Businesses

The Businesses activities of the Five-Year Public Education Plan include: workshops for Phase I and II businesses, partnerships with chambers of commerce and trade/business organizations, small space advertising, media relations, advanced technology and telecommunications tools and a business/industry speakers bureau. Supporting these activities, as well as the educational site visits, will be the development and production of printed and other educational materials.

Like the General Public/Residents audience, communications activities for the Businesses audience also take into account that many Los Angeles County enterprises are trying to do the right thing, but have achieved limited success because of lack of knowledge, lack of finances and/or a misunderstanding of their own potential to pollute.

Education activities implemented in the General Public/Residents audience will have a spillover effect on the individuals working in the targeted businesses and industries, and education activities within Businesses will have application to many sub-segments of Public Agency Employees.

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School Education

Given the existence of current and successful school education programs in Los Angeles County, an alliance with one or more of these programs is the most effective and cost-efficient method of communicating with school children. For the 886,000 K-6 children, the County's school assembly show and coordinating youth events will provide the vehicle to teach children to reduce, reuse and recycle, thereby eliminating pollution. For the County's more than 621,000 middle- and high-school children, the County-sponsored Secondary Student Environmental Education Program presented by TreePeople will create a higher understanding of environmental issues and motivate teenagers to take action.

Public Agency Employees

The focus of the Public Agency Employee outreach program is to instill knowledge and motivation so this group becomes "early adopters" of a wide range of best management practices, as well as ambassadors of pollution prevention messages in their local communities.

Public agency employees will receive virtually all stormwater education materials through the agencies' workplace via the use of training programs (Permit section C.1.b.iv), managers and supervisors of applicable County and Co-permittee departments, new employee orientation packets, and existing in-house distribution avenues such as newsletters, staff meetings, bulletin boards, e-mail and paycheck stuffers.

Appropriate public agency employees will be invited to attend the workshops produced for the Businesses audience, and notification of upcoming workshop opportunities also will be distributed through existing in-house channels.

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Measure of Effectiveness

To assess the overall effectiveness of the Five-Year Public Education Plan, research will be conducted at the three-year mark (1999) and at the conclusion of the campaign in year five (2001). This research will encompass quantitative studies in the General Public/Residents (year three *and* five) and Businesses (auto repair, restaurant and construction, year five *only*) audiences. It will include a component to assess why and how the program is working so that the research will continue to help in the refinement and improvement of the program over the life of the Plan. Additionally, other anecdotal, qualitative and quantitative measurements will be implemented periodically to assess the effectiveness of the program among specific audiences or in different media channels.

Evaluation data at the three- and five-year marks will be collected through a telephone survey of men and women, 16+ years old, who have been residents of Los Angeles County for at least six months. Analysis of the data will include correlating the information gathered against the benchmark established in the pre-campaign segmentation study.

Format of the Five-Year Public Education Plan

The Five-Year Public Education Plan was written and formatted with an immediate focus on responding to the requirements of the NPDES Permit and presenting the necessary information in a clear and concise manner.

There are five major sections to the Plan: 1. Overview (Situation Analysis, Goals, Strategies, Overarching Approach); 2. Segmenting the General Public Target Audience; 3. Implementation by Target Audience (General Public/Residents, Businesses, School Education, Public Agency Employees); 4. Measurement of Effectiveness; and, 5. Appendices.

Within Section 3, Implementation by Target Audience, the four audience subsections detail the situation analysis for each respective audience, goals and overall communications approach, and the activities to be implemented within the audience including a description, timing/frequency, and County and Co-permittee responsibilities. The Appendices include a Glossary of Terms, a listing of available BMPs from Model Programs and the segmentation research and business baseline questionnaires.